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NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD

NFAC-6524-

Memorandum for Holders-1 of
NFIB-14.2/8

30 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR HOLDERS-1 OF NFIB-14.2/8

FROM : Walter Elder
Secretary

SUBJECT : Dissenting Positions in National Intelligence Estimates
and Memorandums [redacted]

REFERENCE : NFIB-14.2/8, 10 July 1980

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The attached memoranda are forwarded for your information. [redacted]

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[redacted]
WALTER ELDER

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Attachments
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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

Attachment to
Memorandum for Holders-1 of
NFIB-14.2/8
30 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Foreign Intelligence Board

FROM : Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

SUBJECT : Dissenting Positions in National Intelligence Estimates
and Memorandums

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Attached is the final version of the DCI's guidelines on dissenting positions in NIEs. We received comments from a number of you and have adjusted the text to reflect most if not all of your problems. In particular, let it be understood that NIOs will not unilaterally change dissenting language that reflects the personal positions of NFIB principals.

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Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.

Attachment
(15 September 1980)

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

Attachment to
Memorandum for Holders-1 of
NFIB-14.2/8
30 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Members of the National Foreign Intelligence Board
Chairman, National Intelligence Council
National Intelligence Officers

SUBJECT : Dissenting Positions in National Intelligence
Estimates and Memorandums [redacted]

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1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidelines covering the format, the procedures for submission, and the content of dissenting positions in National Intelligence Estimates, Special National Intelligence Estimates, Interagency Intelligence Memorandums and Intelligence Alert Memorandums. I want to assure that all members of the NFIB have the fullest possible opportunity to present alternative judgments in those instances where they find they differ with the DCI's findings set forth in the main text of these estimative papers. Some recent NIE practice, however, indicates -- substance apart -- that there is a certain lack of order and clarity in the way we in NFIB are handling problems of dissent. For this reason, I forward this memorandum of guidance. [redacted]

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2. Dissenting views and alternative assessments are important factors in the process of preparing national intelligence; their clear communication to the consumer is essential. Current DCI policy requires that dissenting positions or alternative views appearing in national intelligence be given treatment equal to the main text in length, degree of detail, and rationale. National Intelligence Officers responsible for the preparation of national intelligence have been charged to assure that the text of an estimate and dissenting views clearly show the reasons each of the differing views is held. It is often the explanation of the differing views that will be of greatest value to the reader. [redacted]

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3. The guidelines below are not intended to circumscribe in any way the right of the NFIB members to dissent in NIEs but to assist the DCI in clearly communicating to policymakers the findings of the Intelligence Community on important foreign developments. [redacted]

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Attachment to
Memorandum for Holders-1 of
NFIB-14.2/8
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4. Format and Procedures

a. As has been standard practice throughout the history of NIEs, the main text of national intelligence issuances will contain the findings of the DCI. Dissents of members of the NFIB, including the CIA member, will appear in the same format as the findings of the main text. The DCI will not himself take dissenting opinions.

b. The specific format selected by the NIO and the dissenting agency representative will be fully coordinated during the drafting process. Whether the main text and dissenting positions are presented in separate paragraphs, separate sections, or annexes will depend on the nature and substance of the dissent, and will be determined through consultation between the NIO and representatives of the dissenting agency, on occasion, and with the consent of the agency concerned, the dissent of a single agency on a matter clearly secondary to the purpose of the estimate may be accommodated in a footnote. Footnotes may also be used when an agency wishes to reaffirm a dissenting position taken in an earlier estimate.

c. The production schedule for the estimate should provide sufficient time for staffing within agencies and for the identification of dissenting positions as early as possible after issuance of the first draft.

d. The NIO and agency representatives should agree on the texts of dissenting positions appearing in subsequent drafts of the estimate, which would be subject to later review and approval by dissenting NFIB principals.

e. Prior to the pre-NFIB meeting of representatives on the final draft of the estimate, agency representatives should obtain the preliminary reaction of their principals on the dissenting positions to appear in the estimate. As in the past, the final decisions on the main text and dissenting positions would be made during the deliberations of the NFIB on the estimate.

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5. Content

a. The NIOs and agencies participating in the production of national intelligence should share the responsibility for assuring that dissenting positions (1) address issues within the scope of the estimate, (2) parallel the main text in substance and degree of detail, and (3) convey clear supporting rationale for the dissenting view.

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b. The NIOs, acting for the DCI and working in conjunction with the dissenting agency or agencies, have the editing authority to insure that dissents do indeed parallel the main text in their format, coverage, and presentation; they do not have the authority to change the substantive thrust of the dissents, provided only that those dissents present evidence and analysis and do not attribute positions to the main text which the DCI neither states nor intends.

6. There will be no counter-dissents.

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7. These guidelines are intended to apply to national intelligence issuances prepared under scheduling procedures short of crash precedence. The handling of dissents will have to be adjusted under compressed procedures to produce national intelligence issuances on an urgent basis. (U)

8. Your cooperation in implementing these guidelines will be appreciated.

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STANSFIELD TURNER

(18 September 1980)